

Residence Time and Military Workplace Literacies



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Abstract: Despite widespread interest in the reintegration of Post-9/11 military veterans into civilian life, the literacies of Post-9/11 veterans, both academic and professional, remain largely untheorized. This paper addresses this dearth of information by examining the induction processes and resulting workplace literacies of soldiers, airmen/women, sailors, and Marines. Examining two recent war memoirs, one by an enlisted soldier and another by an officer, we examine uses of language, particularly in terms of the way military values are inscribed during the period of induction yet also are subject to interaction with the service member's history and scripts prior to military service. We posit "residence time" as a theoretical approach for understanding veterans' transition challenges. We hope that this model may be useful to higher education, civilian sector employers, and veterans themselves as the US draws down from the Post-9/11 wars and service members transition back into civilian sectors of society.

Despite widespread interest in the reintegration of Post-9/11 military veterans into civilian life (for instance, Baechtold and Sawal; Caplan, Cook and Young; DiRamio, Ackerman and Mitchell; the Pew Research Center's "The Military-Civilian Gap"; and Raddatz), the transitional literacy needs of Post-9/11 veterans, both academic and professional, remain largely untheorized and the importance of their military literacies under-valued. In this paper, we aim to address this dearth of discussion by addressing veteran transition in the Post-9/11 era through the notion of residence time, which offers a way of understanding workplace literacies developed by soldiers, airmen/women, sailors, and Marines through military service and powerfully introduced during induction processes. Residence time may offer university and industry audiences a theoretical framework from which to understand civilian-to-military and, in turn, military-to-civilian transition. We hope that the notion of residence time will launch more research and analysis by university researchers, civilian employers, veterans' advocacy groups, and government entities into the workplace literacies inculcated in military environments and the implications of those literacies for veteran reintegration into civilian society.

We undertake this literacy discussion as one way of addressing the urgent need for new approaches to veteran reintegration, especially into the civilian workplace. Humensky et al. have found that Post-9/11 veterans remain unemployed at higher-than-average rates than veterans of other eras, as well as for non-veterans in their age group, despite significant training in occupational specialties and personal/professional development during their time in the military. Veteran reintegration is important not just to veterans themselves, as retired Army lieutenant general and former ambassador to Afghanistan Larry Eikenberry has explained. Using a term more dramatic than the Pew Research Center's military-civilian "gap," he describes a new "chasm" between military personnel and civilians. Ascribing blame to the end of the draft, he describes some effects of cultural detachment from military service, one of which is the creation of a military caste in which less than .05% of the population serves in today's armed forces, compared to 12% during World War II. Eikenberry points out that recruits come disproportionately from the disadvantaged, which enables the broader culture to distance itself from this sector

and its issues. This cultural chasm also contributes to public complacency about decisions to go to war, about uses of military technologies such as drones, and about the potential for over-reach through military intervention into objectives such as nation-building. Eikenberry's claims suggest that the divorce of military and civilian populations creates a dangerous political, economic, and ideological split.

Given this exigency, we address veteran transition as a matter of literacy, framing the development of both veteran and civilian workplace literacies within a concept known as residence time and offering a taxonomy of veterans within an explanation of military induction. We describe the values and literacies that derive from the residence time associated with military service, launched through induction processes and reinforced through ongoing training. To introduce residence time as an analytical lens for understanding military workplace experience and its literacy, we examine the memoirs of two combat veterans, one enlisted and one officer. The enlisted soldier is Medal of Honor recipient Salvatore Giunta, whose memoir, *Living With Honor*, is as much the story of the power and resonance of induction into the military as it is the story of Giunta's medal-earning valor. The officer's memoir, *Beyond Duty*, is from Captain Shannon Meehan, who offers insight into the complexities of highly developed military and especially combat literacies, particularly in terms of what they demand of young leaders. We then discuss civilian-to-military transition and its corollary, military-to-civilian transition, as shifts in workplace literacy that function as constitutive rhetorics, forming and reforming identities as much as they reflect them. We posit that military induction's speed and effectiveness is unique and that transition back into civilian environments is far more difficult than most care to know. Throughout this discussion, we return to the concept of residence time, a theory used in engineering, earth science, and fluid mechanics as a way of explaining the speed and relative ease with which an object moves through a system. This conceptual model offers one way of understanding transitions between workplaces, including the transition of civilians to military service and the transition of veterans out of military service and into civilian working environments.

Military Service as Literacy Event; Residence Time as Theoretical Frame

Induction processes and follow-on military training function as forms of specialized literacy learning that leave a lasting imprint, often becoming central to the identity of the people who experience them. Thinking of military experience in this way, as a form of literacy learning that emerges from a particular culture, allows us to understand the depth of the experience and the loyalty that veterans often feel long after they have left the military. It also explains the disappointment veterans sometimes feel with civilian transition models as they exit the military. Framing military transition as a literacy issue allows us to think of transition out of the military as a kind of re-setting of one's life, an opportunity to add new, civilian literacies rather than to do wholesale discarding of military identity. Leaving the military, in other words, does not have to mean that the military person must wipe clean his or her identities but rather that military experience and its attendant literacies can be understood as valuable influences upon the way the veteran thinks and acts in new contexts. Military induction, as the initiating event for the highly efficient and effective transition of thousands of people from civilian to military, might thus be worthy of study. Since military induction processes inscribe literacies that are deeply internalized by those who experience them, higher education and civilian employers can benefit by analyzing them further.

Both educational institutions and employers are struggling to understand the military-to-civilian reintegration task as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan draw to a close. To address this issue, we offer the concept of residence time as a theoretical way of understanding transition. For scientists and engineers, residence time explains the amount of time it takes for an object or particle to move through a physical system (Leckner and Ghirelli). For example, residence time in terms of a reservoir of water means the amount of time a water molecule stays in the

reservoir. Residence time begins when the object enters the system and ends when it moves out. The measurements may include both actual and theoretical residency, with actual time involving delays that occur for a variety of reasons, problems, or obstacles (Bice; Barfield, Warner, and Haan 257). For the purposes of our argument, we consider residence time in the workplace to consist of the period of time needed to complete a full transition, or induction, into that workplace's culture and expectations.

This model connects well to Schlossberg's transition model, which suggests that when moving into any context, people experience predictable phases of transition that can be summarized as moving in, moving out, and moving on. Civilians who transition into the military first experience the extensive period of "moving in" through the powerful induction of Basic Training, which demands a devotion to and investment in the service member's developing capacity to execute the job and understand its meaning. Once the period of service has passed and the military person is leaving, "transition," "reintegration," or Schlossberg's "moving out" is encountered again as service members become veterans and civilians.

The formal outprocessing program in the military, called the Transition Assistance Program or TAP, attempts to address this transition by focusing on physical and mental health screenings for PTSD, TBI, and substance abuse; paperwork associated with veterans' benefits offered largely through the Veterans' Administration (VA); and some amount of information on transitional needs such as marital counseling, educational opportunities, and writing a resumé for civilian contexts. When compared to the intense induction a soldier experiences in preparation for service, this period of moving out is brief and cursory, and many veterans find the experience profoundly disappointing. It must be said, however, that it would be difficult to prepare soldiers for the variety of civilian contexts they will encounter; indeed it would be nearly impossible to replicate the powerful transition associated with military induction itself, and, in fact, the strength of military induction may create unrealistic expectations for "moving in" to new work environments. Having said that, the Department of Defense and others are attempting to improve the transition programs they offer to service members. Nonetheless, the task of "moving on," which involves another period of induction, largely belongs to the private resources of the veteran and to the civilian sectors that the veteran will enter. Among other things, new work and learning locations need to clarify the literacies that are expected of veterans, and this second induction, we believe, might benefit from an examination of the first, which is what we undertake here.

The concept of residence time offers a framework for analyzing not only what military literacies are and how they are constructed but also how organizations more generally, military and civilian, can be conceived of as dynamic containers through which people flow. Flow rate refers to the speed of movement through the system. As flow rate increases, residence time decreases. By visualizing workplace contexts, including the military, as containers or reservoirs through which people, like water molecules, flow, we can visualize workplaces as reservoirs in which the medium's opacity and density—or what might broadly be referred to as ambient conditions—matter. Literacies that are gained in such systems are one indication of the effect of the container; where and why literacies take hold, or more simply, "take," as they do in the military, may be worth investigating, a process we begin in this essay. We argue that residence time can help us to explain why time, effort, and intensity are factors in transition, but also why the medium of the container, its viscosity or resistance to the motion of the immersed object (or person), is a major factor. The clearer and less viscous the medium, the faster the flow. In the case of military induction, where the flow rate, or the speed of transition, is necessarily fast, viscosity is very low and clarity very high, ambient conditions that have been distilled through the centuries-long refinement of military induction processes. Civilian organizations will only rarely be able to reproduce such conditions of transition, but they can emulate them. One area where universities and employers might focus their efforts is in values articulation. Laid out clearly, explained meaningfully, and then reinforced regularly, new values can replace or

supplement old, just as military values replaced the service members' pre-service values.

Drawing on the concept of residence time, we are interested in the amount of time it takes for a veteran to achieve civilian reintegration, however that is defined. We imagine there are standard reintegration processes for veterans as well as obstructed reintegration processes, both of which affect residence time. Furthermore, by developing new ways of understanding the literacy demands of civilian workplaces as problems of flow into and through systems, we hope to help colleges and employers understand that improving conditions inside the reservoir can directly influence the process of transition, its duration and effectiveness. Also, differences between theoretical and actual residence time may help explain why a veteran will thrive in one civilian location and not in another. In other words, as existing literacies deriving from military service bump up against civilian literacies, there will be locations where transition takes and others where it does not. Further investigations might identify the key factors that contribute to viscosity, bottlenecks, or sluggish movement into and through civilian systems. In this essay, however, we are interested in those factors that contribute to the military's speedy and durable success with transition, or induction, into military service. Through these processes young men and women recruits are substantially changed by military experience: becoming soldiers, sailors, airmen/women, and Marines in rather short order. An examination of these processes may provide important insights for civilian locations.

Using this interpretive lens, we might also say that induction into the military is a system for managing flow within a time frame determined by mission-driven necessities. There is never enough time to build all the skills that are needed for war preparation, but to the extent possible, military induction systematically addresses emerging needs within changing time and situational constraints, a point that is driven home in Giunta's memoir. He describes a training process that involves "the drudgery of practice" (30), undertaken in a timeline that takes too long, is outside of his control, and against which he chafes: "All I kept thinking was *Why the hell are they holding me back? Can't they just let me do my job?*" (30; emphasis in original). In addition, however, military induction processes extend beyond the formalized transition period, as suggested by the memoir of Shannon Meehan, whose induction might be said to have begun in childhood as the son of a man who served in the military, to have included his formal education at a military college, and to have extended well into his first deployment. He describes others' view of him as he grew up: "I was the pride of Upper Derby. I was the American Dream" (14). Meehan's military induction thus involved a *series* of containers, each one leading to the next and reifying the last, all of them accumulating in effect and meaning. Post-military, however, Meehan's primary objective involves undoing his long apprenticeship in American idealism.

A Taxonomy of Veterans

The United States armed forces have been a volunteer force since 1975 and reflect a smaller military than the draft-period predecessor. Male citizens must still register with the Selective Service upon reaching the age of 18, but the military draft of the 1960s and '70s ended with the Vietnam War. Forty years later, this change has dramatically reshaped the American military in terms of its recruitment, retention, and discharge policies. While the draft military drew from a larger and more diverse demographic, the short enlistment periods and involuntary induction resulted in significant turnover and diminished motivation among recruits.

The post-draft military has raised its educational standards, has increased training requirements, and is generally viewed as constituting a more professional force than its predecessor, with more committed members who often view military experience as a rite of passage or a building block toward careers outside the military. However, there have been exceptions to this high profile enlistee; at the peak of the OIF and OEF wars (Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom), force numbers were so low that recruitment standards waned and

waivers were granted to many who would not today qualify. It is also worth noting that the military includes not only the active duty force (those who enlist for full time employment) but also the National Guard and Reserves, both of which have taken on increasing levels of responsibility in the post-draft era. Indeed, many, if not all, of the distinctions between the Active force and the Guard/Reserve have faded under the concept known as the “total force,” which has involved the combined efforts of all types of service from active to reserve to meet the needs of the Post-9/11 wars. Relying on a non-draft military to fight these wars has translated to multiple deployments for those who have served. While most Vietnam War era military members deployed only once or twice to a combat zone, many Post-9/11 veterans have deployed a half dozen times or more, a fact that contributes to a sense of the specialized and professionalized nature of today’s military service.

Within the military structure, there are three defining characteristics that distinguish one military member (and hence, one veteran) from another: 1) Branch of Service—e.g., Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard; 2) Rank—particularly the distinction between the Enlisted/Non-commissioned ranks and the “commissioned” Officer Corps, an obvious difference between Giunta and Meehan; and 3) Military Occupational Specialty (MOS)—i.e. the particular technical area or trade they are employed in within the military, for instance, Infantry (Giunta) and Armor (Meehan). A fourth characteristic is the amount of time a member of the military actually serves or the difference between a single enlistment period of two to four years and a career of 20-30 years. These four characteristics influence the experiences and perspectives of the veteran, and according to Groysberg, Hill, and Johnson, can also affect the veteran’s degree of success in sectors of the civilian economy (82).

Classifications and specializations stretch even further, in more complex variation than can be captured here since distinctions within the military are vast, as one might expect from an organization of its size. Consider just one level of the subcategories within the United States Army, that of branch: Armor, Infantry, Engineer, Military Intelligence, Medical Service Corps, to name but a few. Within each of these branches lie multiple military occupational specialties, or MOSs, and for each of these MOSs there are various levels of skill attainment and qualification processes for which soldiers train and are tested. Similarly, within the Navy, sailors may go through skill attainment in the Enlisted Surface Warfare Specialist (ESWS) qualification process that takes place onboard Navy vessels. For each level within this process, there are training protocols, expected outcomes, and documentable assessments.

One of the most important distinctions among veteran taxonomies also lies in the gulf between combat veterans (those who have deployed overseas and served in a defined combat zone) and non-combat veterans (who may serve stateside or overseas but not in a defined combat zone). While combat experience does not override rank and MOS, it certainly provides an important filter within the ranks of the military and can change a veteran’s sense of his or her military experience and post-military outcomes. While many military members who serve in the military in combat zones/theaters never engage in direct combat, all service members serve at some degree of risk. The relatively small percentage that directly engage in combat are most commonly from the combat arms MOSs, particularly Infantry, Armor, Aviation, Artillery, and Special Operations—the so-called “tooth” of the military force. A common reference in the military is the “tooth to tail” ratio, the “tail” referring to the support and logistics personnel required to sustain the fighting forces or “tooth.” In modern warfare, the tail is usually two to four times larger than the tooth. That does not mean that the tail is less important or that the tail is unready for combat or is not inducted into the skills associated with combat arms but rather that once the initial induction period is over, the tooth goes in one direction in the military workplace and the tail goes in another. While some of these distinctions amongst military specialties may fade when service members deploy to a combat zone, there remain important differences between those directly engaged in combat and those providing logistical and

administrative support.

Injuries and wounds of war yield another veteran categorization. Although military members are injured and killed in non-combat accidents due to training and other activities, those injured due to hostile fire or in the context of a combat zone are a subset of the veteran population that is particularly venerated by fellow veterans. Both Giunta and Meehan were injured in combat, although Meehan's injuries appear to have been more serious than Giunta's. Like thousands of others from the OIF and OEF wars, Meehan sustained at least two of the signature wounds of the Post-9/11 wars: a wound to his limbs as well as Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) as result of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). Giunta was sufficiently safeguarded by his protective gear so that even though he was shot several times during the event that led to his being awarded the Medal of Honor, he was not seriously wounded.

Induction as a Component of Ongoing Training

The US military is first and foremost a training (and learning) organization—arguably, the largest of its kind in the world, consisting of several million employees at any one time and managing billions of dollars in assets, all of which make it possible for training to be continuously renewed, refreshed, and assessed. Also, within the military there is an uncommon commitment to learning from mistakes. Additionally, learning is a system-wide value; according to Frances Hesselbein and General Eric Shinseki, former Chief of Staff of the Army and Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs (the largest government organization supporting veteran reintegration), “Leaders promote learning in at least three ways: through their own learning on a personal level, by helping others in their units learn, and by shaping and contributing to an organizational culture that promotes learning” (133). This commitment to ongoing learning and training and its corollary, individual and organizational assessment, are the hallmarks of military training’s sweeping efficiency and durability. Military induction, as a subset of this larger training mission of the military, draws attention to the fact that combat preparation involves the highest of stakes, which helps to explain why learning is accelerated.

We focus in this discussion on induction processes as a key facet of the military learning model in order to suggest what might be learned from the military’s approach to transition. However, while military literacies are initially introduced to recruits during the time-honored, formal induction process known as Basic Training, which offers the kind of collective induction that research demonstrates is robust in producing “work role adjustment” (Zahhly and Tosi 69), full induction into military literacies actually extends well beyond this initial, formal, and extremely powerful period. It entails ongoing professional development and sustained mentoring in an approach that involves immersion, assessment, and re-immersion in an endless cycle of improvement in which learning is treated as infinite rather than as a finite set of skills. The military is designed, funded, equipped, and manned to fight wars, but training and practice (for the eventuality of war)—from individual to unit-level training, and from introductory to advanced levels—form the foundation of the military experience, in peacetime and in war. Even during extended periods of combat, training is ongoing.

Of course, we run the risk of over-simplifying the large variety of military experiences and preparations for them by suggesting that they fit into a single explanatory category. Moreover, we wish to acknowledge the shortcomings of collapsing military groups, for while military induction is unified by the experience of Basic Training, military experience and its attendant literacies vary greatly depending on the military occupational specialty (MOS) and a variety of other factors, including branch of service and rank, as earlier sections of this article have suggested. We draw attention to this point because most of the literature on veteran reintegration and transition to date has represented “veterans” as a unified identity group, when, in fact, veteran identities are quite

varied.

Having acknowledged the important dissimilarities among veteran groups, however, we also posit that there are many experiences and understandings that veterans share irrespective of military branch or time of service. These are first inculcated through the formalized induction process known as Basic Training, which is accomplished in the relatively brief amount of time alluded to in the previous section. At Basic Training, from the moment new enlistees step off the bus, they are immersed in a world that explicitly signals who is who by virtue of military rank, drill instructor hats, and leadership badges associated with military uniforms. Recruits quickly learn about the organizational structure and hierarchy of the military service via organizational charts, written rules and regulations, standard operating procedures, and unit signage. They are taught the ceremonial protocols of the culture such as how to respond verbally to superiors, when and how to salute, when to come to “attention,” and other formalities. They are taught the tasks and practices of the profession of arms—how to handle, disassemble and fire weapons; how to operate personal and tactical equipment; how to use radio protocols and the phonetic alphabet; and how to work in teams, squads, and other units of various size and composition. Perhaps most importantly, inductees go through these processes in cohorts, forming bonds of friendship that help them survive the process and learn the one universal axiom of military service: everything is about accomplishing the mission through teamwork while taking care of those on your left and right.

The typical enlistee may actually go through several induction and integration processes from the time he or she first enters the military to the time he or she reports to his or her first unit. Each of these stages has different components in which service members become part of a team by proving that they can carry their weight and be contributors to their units. In Basic Training, the focus is on learning military skills and discipline as well as on learning how to work with others, which means getting along with people from many different cultures and geographies. In Basic Training, the mission is to ready the service members for assignment to actual military units. Once the service members graduate from Basic and other schooling (such as Advanced Training, Airborne School, and Ranger School) and report to their first units, the integration process focuses more on unit training and unit mission, rather than on the individual.

Typically, a service member will reside in a unit assignment for a period of two to four years before moving on to another unit assignment. This assignment period might be considered a form of residence time within a unit, with each period being important to the development of the service member. In fact, military units themselves have unique historical legacies and symbolisms, which are made evident by the patches or badges worn on uniforms and through the signs and flags affiliated with a unit’s history. Giunta conveys this facet of his time with the 173rd Airborne Brigade, a unit of some renown due to its traditional role of serving “at the tip of the spear” during combat. Meehan addresses it in his discussion of the 1st Cavalry Division patch that his unit wears and the fact that his soldiers invoke the patch (“Hug your horses!”) in difficult times. A US Army soldier who remains in the military for only one enlistment period may be assigned to just one such unit, or at most two, during his or her entire service period. Career soldiers are more often assigned to five or six units over the course of a 20-30 year career. During their time in a particular unit, regardless of its length, service members gain an important affinity and sense of pride in that unit. They often retain this affinity long after they leave the military. Consequently, some veterans ultimately identify more with the unit they served in—for example, the 101st Airborne Division (known as the Screaming Eagles) or SEAL TEAM 6 (known for its mission to kill Osama bin Laden)—than they do with their particular branch of service.

Giunta and Meehan: Case Studies of Military Literacy Induction

We turn now to an introductory analysis of military induction and workplace literacies using the lens of residence time and drawing upon the case studies of Giunta and Meehan, who both served in the US Army. As self-reports, these are memoirist accounts, undertaken with co-authors who helped shape the narratives. We say this not to discredit the memoirs but to suggest that they cannot serve as definitive and generalizable data; we call for additional research to do precisely that. With this caveat in mind, we nonetheless argue that Giunta's and Meehan's memoirs offer rare access to the induction processes involved in becoming Army soldiers and leaders of soldiers and are at least evocative of residence time as it pertains to military service. They illustrate certain social practices and workplace literacies associated with their differing roles. They also gesture toward differences in experiences and outcomes even among those engaged in similar discursive features of combat roles. Yet we also find common themes in their memoirs, and these themes help to define what is meant by military, and, more specifically, combat literacy. Their examples suggest the importance of residence time to the development of literacies in the military workplace, as well as the costs and rewards of mastering them.

As we consider these men's experiences of induction and what they may tell us about transition, we call attention to the obvious but sometimes forgotten fact that veterans were at one time civilians prior to their service. Military personnel had residence time in other locales, and their residence time in those locations influenced them as well. Nevertheless, it is a testimony to the powerful influence of military induction that the label "veteran" becomes a most important identification for many who have served, including Giunta and Meehan. In selecting the following sections from Giunta's and Meehan's memoirs, we considered the following questions: How is the powerful transition from civilian to soldier accomplished and what insights can we glean about transition from these narratives of military induction? What salient features of military literacy practices emerge from their stories? How did they move on and out at the conclusion of their service? How might these insights be useful when considering the needs of veterans to work and learn within civilian sites and to use civilian literacies?

Our analysis of Giunta's and Meehan's memoirs suggests that, whether enlisted or officer, a soldier learns discursive approaches that are embedded in a military community of practice that is focused on action and responsibility. Yet the two men enact these values differently. Our analysis also suggests that induction into combat literacy involves negotiating evolving circumstances and inadequate time. Ultimately, the literacies of the (military) workplace are likely to be resisted, revised, and subverted as those literacies dynamically interact with a life story that extends before and after military service. We posit that military service occurs within a series of containers, each having its own residence time, and in which the effectiveness of the residence time associated with induction (including the inculcation of military values and literacies) is regularly put to the test.

An Emphasis on Action and Responsibility

Giunta's and Meehan's memoirs suggest that a soldier's induction and service involve the internalization of a narrative of meaning around the twin responsibilities of action and responsibility. Whether or not the soldier is ever asked to undertake combat, these values are internalized and made ready for use. Hence, the induction process involves not just physical preparedness but an internalized understanding of preparation's importance. Giunta describes how these values are inculcated in training: "We trained endlessly and diligently to prepare ourselves for the complex challenges of combat" (64). He reports that the goal was to reduce the chances of soldiers betraying each other's trust by being "somewhat anesthetized to the sound of gunfire and disciplined enough to hold our ground" (64). In turn, Meehan articulates action and responsibility from a leadership perspective: "I wanted them [my men] to believe that I would make the right decisions for the platoon and for each of them . . . But . . . Bosch's death . . . confronted me with the unsettling reality that none of us were really safe. . . . I worried what that might mean for us, for my men, and I wondered what that might mean for the

people in Iraq" (83). These descriptions suggest that Giunta and Meehan understand action and responsibility as central components of their roles. Although they experience action and responsibility somewhat differently, they both see action and responsibility as often competing impulses.

Negotiating Imperfect Circumstances and Time

While training occurs as quickly as circumstances allow, full learning of the requisite skills of combat always demands more time than is available. Also, the circumstances of training can never anticipate the variations of real contexts. Time, too, is never ideal. Decisions are either rushed or too deliberate. The project of developing combat literacy also extends beyond the artificial end of the formal induction period and is never really finished.

Giunta's and Meehan's memoirs suggest that the mastery of the military literacies of action and responsibility are always balanced against the conditions on the ground, which rarely present themselves in the perfect form for which training may have prepared the service member. In a combat situation, a person must adapt or perish. Hence, efforts to prepare will continue until the last conceivable moment. A service member goes into combat as prepared as that person will be, but circumstances often, or perhaps generally, compromise the mission and clarify the strengths and weaknesses of an individual's preparedness for meeting war's infinite complications. As Giunta says, "You never get to fight at full strength" (57). He points to features of terrain, weather, and rules of engagement that constrain action.

It might even be suggested that tough terrain and the enemy force's knowledge and control of it were nearly the deciding factors in the situation leading to his Medal of Honor action. Arguably, it was only Giunta's training that prevented those circumstances from overwhelming him. In steep terrain in the Korengal Valley, the eighteen men in Giunta's unit walked into an ambush of high tactical sophistication. The insurgents hid themselves behind natural terrain such as rocks and trees, while the US soldiers were completely exposed. Giunta's buddy Sergeant Brennan was hit and disappeared, but Giunta saw the gravely wounded Brennan being carried away by insurgents. Giunta shot both of the fighters who were carrying Brennan away, killing one and wounding the other. For these actions, and in particular for having ignored his own safety for the sake of others, Giunta was awarded the Medal of Honor. However, both Brennan and the unit's medic, Doc Mendoza, died as result of that battle, and so the title of Giunta's memoir, *Living With Honor*, takes on additional resonance, suggesting not only the values associated with an honorable life, but the burden of living with the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a military person when, in fact, so much was lost in the process.

Similarly, service members like Meehan who serve in leadership roles make decisions under the pressure of time and with incomplete knowledge and information as well as imperfect communication. Meehan's description of the decision-making process that led him to call in the airstrike that changed his life suggests the ambiguous nature of battlefield circumstances and the necessarily incomplete information from which decisions are made:

Any more delay and we would corrupt the mission for the entire battalion. The time to decide was running out. . . . I knew what I had to do Still that wire running into the house bothered me. . . . What was the catch? I began to sweat. This decision seemed heavier. . . . I worked through it all in my head one more last time. (6-7)

Despite the military's deliberate and systematic training, which attempts to prepare service members for every exigency, Meehan's experience speaks directly to the impossibility of the task. In war, life and death decisions will always be made with incomplete information, thus ensuring that mistakes and consequences will be endured.

Meehan called an airstrike on a house in which children and other non-combatants lived. It was an event that nearly shattered his life and under which, at the conclusion of his memoir, he still struggles. While his decision was based on the best information available at the time, he also knew that this information was flawed and partial. Ultimately though, as the mission's leader, it was he who had to make a decision and make it fast since his only other option was to put his own soldiers at additional risk. So he ordered the airstrike. Then, almost immediately, reports started coming in about children on bicycles near the house. He learned that his order had killed civilians, and in time he learned that his order had killed eight children inside the building as well as others outside of it.

As the examples of Giunta and Meehan suggest, military literacy involves being prepared for combat situations in which difficult decisions are based on limited and flawed information. Persons in such contexts will make mistakes, and outcomes can range from a medal for heroism to death, or both. Regardless, military members must learn to adapt to ever-changing circumstances, to weigh impossible odds, and then to act based on available knowledge, ingrained reflexes, and substantial training. Sometimes they get it right, and sometimes they get it wrong, but given the extent of military training, it is hard to imagine how badly things might go if service members did not have their military induction and ongoing training behind them, both supporting them and holding them accountable.

(Military) Learning Involves Ongoing and Continuous Effort

Both memoirs establish that the development of military literacy involves learning that never ends. For instance, learning to take action and then taking responsibility for what happens are ongoing lessons, rather than bounded approaches contained strictly within the induction phase or the residence time container known as Basic Training. Preparation becomes an ongoing process and is focused on developing an increasingly refined understanding of the work of war. Hence, Giunta is already an established marksman when he develops mastery in shooting his weapon with a unit member ten feet in front of him, thus learning how to stay focused and (hopefully) avoid a friendly-fire incident (64). At another time in his development of shooting expertise, his training is inside something called a "shoot house," which is a live-fire training facility in which both combatants and civilians pop up unexpectedly and the marksman learns how to read a situation nearly instantaneously in order to make a split-second judgment about whether to fire the weapon (60). Eventually, Giunta also learns that he must trust not only his own increasingly nuanced knowledge of how to fire his weapon, but also he must trust the training of the rest of his unit. That trust of others is operationalized within the notion of "spacing":

It's important in battle to maintain spacing. And it's not important to do someone else's job when they are already doing it. There is no value in doing someone else's job. There is no need for two people to be on the same step. You need to make sure you are accomplishing a task that has not already been undertaken by someone else in the unit. It's about teamwork and training and acting as a unit, rather than a collection of frantic, scared individuals. (248-49)

Meehan likewise must undertake systematic and ongoing learning during his induction into the role of leading his first combat unit. What he must learn is in some ways more abstract than Giunta's technical shooting skills. His first and most important task is to earn the trust of the men he will lead. He must establish credibility with them in order to earn that trust, and he knows that the success of his leadership will depend on that effort. His goal is that, as their commanding officer, he will one day be able to not only convey authority but also to earn respect through the discourses of orders and actions that he communicates to men who are obliged to follow his direction. Thus, Meehan's early discursive task is to communicate his respect for the men and their greater knowledge of combat than his own. While he realizes that he must embody and communicate his capability and

confidence, he knows he must also embody a leader's role of being in service to those who serve under him. Knowing he must learn from them, Meehan even subjects himself to their ribbing as a way of acknowledging that they are battle-tested and he is not: "We compared notes on our housing, and we teased each other about the differences between my privileges as an officer and their lives as enlisted men" (24). Also, while he knows that it would do no good for him to convey indecision, or a lack of confidence, he also knows he must embody humility around soldiers who have been in battle and have the patch to prove it: "I was surrounded by many men who had been in theater before. . . . The Army ensured that they wore a clear hallmark of their previous service. Soldiers who had been to Iraq before wore the 1st Cavalry patch on both shoulders. The rest of us had it only on our left arm" (24).

The growth of confidence and authority was central to Meehan's induction into the unit, which began what we might consider his residence time in combat leadership. Yet because he was leading during war and thus without complete clarity, his growing mastery of the discourses of command, which was properly focused on protecting his men, could not guarantee that he would be able to avoid the terrible consequences of war and the problem of living with them. In fact, his command decision that cost civilian lives demonstrates this point emphatically. Giunta's memoir similarly suggests that residence time for military members may not end when the job is done, the war is over, or the service member's period of service is at a close. Giunta accepted the lifetime terms of his experience, even if he didn't celebrate it: "It's fair to say that even though I am no longer in the army, the Army remains a vital part of my life . . . and because of the Medal of Honor that will never change" (289).

These memoirs depict extremes of military service since both men found themselves on what is sometimes referred to as "the tip of the spear," or making regular contact with "the enemy" and enduring sustained periods of combat. It must be said that only a subset of those serving in the military ever see this level of combat, although all are more or less prepared to do so, and no distinctions are made between those serving in a theatre of war and those actually seeing action or having contact with enemy forces. However, that the men in these memoirs saw not only combat but, arguably, extremes of combat, makes their stories particularly resonant and elucidating. At the same time, the risk in drawing conclusions based upon such extremes of combat experience is that these examples may obscure or even occlude many features of more typical experiences, distracting us from generalizable take-aways from military workplace literacies—a point we return to now in our consideration of the constitutive rhetorics of military service.

The Workplace Literacies of Military Service as Constitutive Rhetorics

As Giunta's and Meehan's examples show, beyond the technical skills associated with each MOS, the military also constructs and reconstructs its own unique culture via what is taught and reinforced, which together form a kind of military literacy. These literacies are internalized by service members, not just used by them. They construct and change each person, and as such become a significant factor in identity formation, not simply a four- or five-year stint in the woods or onboard a ship. For many veterans, their military experience occurs when peers are going to college and having a different type of identity formation themselves. When the veteran returns and decides to use the GI Bill, he or she is that much older and that much "wiser" than those around him or her. Imagine if traditional first-year college students were suddenly thrown onboard a Navy ship and expected to perform equally alongside sailors who had been through basic training and other specialized instruction. They, too, would stumble with their transition.

Those who serve in the military have shared the experience of the various and continued phases of training, acculturation, and development that are inherent to the way the military functions. Among military literacies are

delineations of “good order and discipline”; obeying directions; and strictly observing the chain of command, military protocols, and rules of engagement (in combat), all of which together form the essential underpinnings of military culture. Additionally, codes of conduct guide the treatment of other persons, including “enemy combatants,” and these too are part of the service member’s induction into military values/ethos. Moreover, military practice embeds continuous evaluation of the performance of both individuals and units, and these assessments are documented in the form of counseling reports, evaluation reports, and remediation plans.

Perhaps the most critical and common component of military structure and experience that frames a veteran’s perspective is military leadership/mentorship. While each branch of service may view this component somewhat differently, military culture is framed by authoritative structures and hierarchies. While many outside of the military may view this hierarchical approach as simply an exercise in the use of power, it is actually much more than that. Military leadership is based upon the premise that responsibility accrues with rank and position, a notion commonly referred to as “command.” The [Army Manual \(FM 6-22\)](#)

[\[http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/fm6_22.pdf\]](http://armypubs.army.mil/doctrine/DR_pubs/dr_a/pdf/fm6_22.pdf) explains command as a specific ethical and legal responsibility that involves a “sacred trust” (2-3). Whether officer or non-commissioned enlisted, soldiers in leadership positions have broad responsibility for the “morale and welfare” of their subordinates, and the foundations of military leadership are based upon individualized responsibility for taking care of others. This notion of care for others is deeper than dutiful observation of the “chain of command” and extends to mentorship, which Johnson and Anderson describe as relationships that develop over time and interaction and have important implications for the professional and personal development of both mentee and mentor (112). Given the centrality of “values of care” to the conduct and characteristics of military leadership, abuses of power and authority, such as those associated with the documented 26,000 cases of military sexual trauma in 2012 alone (Steinhauer), to say nothing of the undocumented cases before and after, are an affront to the military code of conduct. Indeed the pervasiveness of military sexual trauma threatens the very core of military ethos and provides an example of the life-altering tensions between stated military values and their practical application in an organization that is the size of the United States military.

Within the United States Army, ethics around caring for others are introduced as part of the values system codified in *The Soldier’s Blue Book*, or [The Guide for the Initial Training Soldiers, TRADOC Pamphlet 600-4](#) [\[http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp600-4.pdf\]](http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/tp600-4.pdf). This pamphlet distills Army induction procedures that take roughly ten weeks to complete. Here, induction is laid out as a four-phase process. Part two, in particular, discusses the values that induction attempts to inculcate, operationalizing what is meant by loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. These values are codified in three documents—the “soldier’s creed [\[http://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html\]](http://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html),” which establishes the idea that the mission comes first, or that concern for oneself is secondary to the mission. The second document defines “[warrior ethos](http://www.army.mil/values/warrior.html) [\[http://www.army.mil/values/warrior.html\]](http://www.army.mil/values/warrior.html),” which involves the soldier’s commitment to the nation and to fellow soldiers, including the vow to never leave a fallen comrade behind. The third, “a soldier’s rules,” compels restraint in all things, including combat itself, which is called to go no further than it must to complete the mission and includes the respectful treatment of all people, whether friends or foes.

In combat, the lessons and literacies learned in basic training and unit training are adapted to the realities and uncertainties of the battlefield. It is this adaptation and flexibility to the situation, or situational awareness, which authentically tests the service member’s fluency as well as the effectiveness of induction processes and advanced training. While combat plans and contingencies are documented as much as possible through genres such as the “[operations order](#)

[\[http://www.armystudyguide.com/content/army_board_study_guide_topics/training_the_force/the-operation-\]](http://www.armystudyguide.com/content/army_board_study_guide_topics/training_the_force/the-operation-)

[order-opord.shtml](#),” the service member ultimately must interpret and implement plans, a process that often involves on-the-ground improvisation and complex problem-solving. Once an operation is complete, the “[after-action report \[http://www.armystudyguide.com/content/powerpoint/Training_the_force_presentations/after-action-review-aar-2.shtml\]](#)” documents what actually happened. This cycle of assessment ingrains a lessons-learned approach, which seeks to build feedback into all efforts in the military operational environment.

Workplace Literacies of Military Settings—A Call for Additional Research

The “social practice” view of workplace literacy (Hull; Street and Lefstein; Darrah; Gowen; Gee) suggests that literacy practices are determined by the contexts in which they develop and are practiced. In any workplace there are multiple literacies that are constructed, chosen, discarded, and revised, rather than existing as a bounded set of skills. Workplace literacies reflect and construct how work is organized, delivered, and responded to in the workplace, and workplace literacies thus reflect negotiations of power and authority in the workplace. They tend also to reinscribe existing hierarchies. Yet Belfiore et al. have also argued that workplace literacies are reconstituted, subverted, and reengineered by those enacting them, even among those in the bottom ranks of an organization. Similarly, Schryer et al. have noted that professionals carefully manage language choices in order to increase the number of ways their messages can be interpreted, thus executing rhetorical strategies that announce the interpretive nature of their professional lenses. The literature on workplace literacies has explored a wide range of language locations, and we believe this discussion should now extend to military discourse and its sites of enactment. We call for that effort and contextualize it here.

In official military discourse, text uses range from the highest level of strategy and doctrinal publications, to field and technical manuals, to specific execution plans such as the [five-paragraph field order \[http://www.armystudyguide.com/content/Leadersbook_information/leadersbook_items/sample-5-paragraph-operat-2.shtml\]](#), which is keyed to an operational event and enacted at the unit level. Standard operating procedures establish general principles of conduct, distilling field manual intentions down to unit-level operations, while rules of engagement codify constraints on operational behavior that are applied across a theater of war. At the unit level, language use is situational and relationship-driven. Evaluation reports on individual service members, for instance, establish the mentorship relationship between junior service members and their superiors. Military genres and uses of language are far more varied than many suspect; Hadlock, for instance, found that a group of former-enlisted student-veterans engaged in more text production than they realized, a finding that, if recognized and acknowledged by the veteran, can “help them move from that identity of being part of a military team into embodying the identities of student, civilian, individual, and agent” (89).

The Relationship of Military Experience and Residence Time to the Revision of Life Story

Induction interacts with a soldier’s existing narratives, including both his or her social roles within the military and his or her prior histories and life stories. Giunta’s response to learning he would be awarded the Medal of Honor shows he was not eager to adopt the hero’s script. When informed he was receiving the award, he said, “Fuck you” to his commander. Later, he would come to terms with the recognition, but only when he met the other surviving Medal of Honor winners and revised the Medal’s meaning, which, he concluded, was not about him: “The advice I receive from the other Medal of Honor recipients is different; it’s larger, born of experience and lessons learned through a lifetime of representing the men and women in uniform” (288). He revised the Medal’s

discursive purposes and accepted the award as a continuation of his service and on behalf of fellow soldiers, especially those who had died but also those who had done what he considered equal to his own contribution.

Giunta's military experience also interacted with his pre-military life story, revising it. Giunta joined the Army after severing ties with his family (particularly his father), underachieving in high school, becoming disenchanted with most of the activities that had once engaged him, and taking a series of jobs that were going nowhere. He describes himself as having stumbled into enlisting after a casual stop at the recruiter's office to get the free t-shirt. His interest in the infantry was then activated by 9/11. He says:

I wanted to join for one reason: to learn how to shoot my weapon more proficiently, and with greater accuracy, than the person I was shooting at, so that I could kill him and then move on and kill some of his friends, because they were all enemies of the United States. If that sounds barbaric, well, it was exactly what the infantry wanted: people who were eager to fight. (26)

But after going to war, Giunta's revised narrative is subdued and self-effacing, appreciative and admiring of his fellow soldiers but decidedly not bloodthirsty: 'I want to stand up and say that what I did was not unique or special and certainly not amazing. . . . I want people to understand something: that if that's how you define 'amazing,' then amazing things are happening every day in Afghanistan and Iraq" (289-90).

For Meehan, whose injuries were both physical and spiritual, the revision of military discourse came in the form of his inability "to say something definitive" (268). The son of a soldier who had been, as Meehan puts it, "the director of my life" (15), Meehan had lived out what he describes as the narrative of the golden boy who had achieved everything his parents and community hoped for, including being a high school state champion wrestler and a distinguished graduate of the Virginia Military Institute (VMI). Still, even before he left on deployment, Meehan recognized that he was fulfilling a narrative that not only had been spun *for* him rather than *by* him but that the narrative itself was taking him down a path toward (self) destruction. Looking at his father on the day he deployed, he saw that his father "knew that I needed him to be proud of me. He also knew I'd lived my story too well. I couldn't change now" (18). Ultimately, Meehan's life narrative of mastery and success pursued him into the fog of war, where a rational decision, weighed ever so carefully, turned into a tragedy that dispelled the myth of his irrepressible youth and success. Upon returning home, with injuries both internal and external, he remained aloof, unwilling to capitulate to the familiar narrative that had taken him on a journey into war, injury, shame, and loss, despite his family's attempts to reach out to him. He refused to let things return to normal by refusing to continue to follow the script of being "the pride of Upper Derby," saying:

My sister held me once and told me that she missed me. My brother frantically tried to find ways to make me laugh, to engage me in the world of our friends. . . . I told them that we needed to find a way to celebrate the lives we had ahead of us. We had to change things. Improve them. Take control. (259)

Here the contrast to his earlier self is pronounced. Having left the military, he has survived, but barely, and he does not offer himself or his reader any platitudes because the war and its aftermath are not over for him and, one gathers, never will be. He feels pressured to say whether he supports the war, imagining the curiosity of his reading audience, but he is a changed man and he refuses to answer, exerting as he does the kind of control that is also a revision to a prior life story of compliance and eagerness to please. By the end of the memoir, he rejects and subverts the hero's story, and his memoir is an extension of this revised narrative.

Giunta's and Meehan's military literacies were inculcated through induction processes that prioritize action and

responsibility. Those literacies were then constrained and strained by the actual experience of war. Their narrations suggest that they have taken control of their own stories and, as such, are subverting the claim that military literacy made upon them. Both reject the hero's story. But at the same time, both men's residence time in the military helped them to subvert life stories that, had they not joined the military, might have remained unexamined and unchanged. Military experience made it possible for them to break the mold of where they were and to start again. Their military experience changed them; it both developed and harmed them. In terms of residence time, their movement through the system of the military container was fast, but the speed of the experience did not reduce its meaning. These were defining years of their lives. On the other hand, we sense that they will not be the only or final times that define them.

Implications of Military Induction for Civilian Reintegration: Using the Lens of Residence Time

What lessons might we take from the induction processes and literacy aims of military integration, particularly as seen in the examples of Giunta and Meehan, and how might these lessons be useful for civilian reintegration? Can a civilian context ever compare to the military in meaning and impact once a person has served?

Many veterans report that civilian induction and integration, regardless of the sector, is a longer, more uneven, and far less structured process than military induction. Chad Storlie, career Army officer and corporate leader, explains that many veterans struggle with the transition:

Corporate culture, as opposed to military culture, is largely unspoken and can often only be discerned through observation, quiet discussion and experience. The veteran needs to approach a new organization, manager and peer employees through a very open and unbiased perspective and not fall prey to the potential pitfalls of title, expected hierarchical relationships, or biased expectations of how a corporate culture should or must operate based upon a military culture or military hierarchy paradigm. (47)

Here we see that even among civilians like Storlie who have experience in the military, the emphasis in civilian employment is generally on the veteran's obligation to conform to new expectations. Conforming often involves the kind of corporate training in which the new employee learns about the company, its mission, and its protocols. That employee may receive a period of on-the-job training with a mentor or fellow employee to learn the ropes of the organization. Similarly, on college campuses, the student-veteran may receive an incoming orientation from student services on how to become a successful student, or may be welcomed to a study area with student services designed specifically for veterans. However, it should be clear by now that these civilian induction processes bear little resemblance to the intensity, rigor, and meaningfulness of military induction and subsequent military experience. As we have discussed, military induction involves an intensity that is difficult to replicate. Hence, veterans, whether combat veterans or not, whether part of the tooth or the tail of the military, may struggle to develop an appreciation for a company or an institution of higher education, in part because they do not know what the mission is or, if they can fathom it, why it matters. Moreover, they may have too little responsibility for anyone else, lacking a "battle buddy" in the civilian context, and too little guidance, lacking a clear chain-of-command structure. In general, the stakes, quite frankly, may seem too low, the pace too slow. In the civilian environment, it is not just the fact that the pace and approach involved in developing responsibilities and friendships are often slower and more casual than those made in shared barracks rooms, foxholes, vehicles, and ships. It is also that decisions are made collaboratively, not issued through commands, and that workplace responsibility may be distributed but in ways that serve more of an accountability agenda or a surveillance

function than to achieve a shared goal based on mutual reliance, like that achieved by Giunta and the infantry soldiers' knowledge of spacing.

Also, supervisors and professors may be less mentor-leaders than manager-facilitators, and the veteran may express disappointment with a "command climate" in which expectations are loosely defined or self-determined and thus may seem low, even if they are not. As a result of these differences, veterans may feel confused, disoriented, or disillusioned with their new surroundings, the people who inhabit them, the literacies expected in their new communities of practice, and the leaders-managers-professors who may or may not articulate them. They may convey impatience, disengagement, and disapproval for what they see as unstated expectations, and these reactions in turn may present a negative image to those around them. In many ways, their military induction may have been so effective that it becomes a liability for reintegration.

However, the ideological differences between military and civilian sectors suggest an outline for transitional literacy efforts. As part of a reintegration process, each element—peer relationships, decision-making, personal and organizational responsibility, the role of "leaders"—might be addressed directly by civilian employers and educational institutions as features affecting the residence time of induction into their organizations and demonstrative of the different (and not necessarily inferior) ambient qualities of the organizational containers. In other words, the quality and nature of the container as a medium for transition can be systematically explained. Such efforts would require planning and execution that include organizational introspection and reflective processing in order to articulate goals and literacy expectations. Such efforts might be part of a broad agenda associated with transitional residence time in which the organization or institution sets out systematically to identify, assess, and articulate the often unspoken literacies of interaction and expectation within communities of professional, non-military practice. Additionally, civilian contexts might take a page from the military in developing unit pride or a sense of the history and legacy of the organization. The values, attitudes, and stories that underlie and define the company's ethos and practice might be identified, conveyed, and developed, as might the mission statement of the college/university or academic course of study.

Ultimately, the goal of veteran integration into the civilian workplace or classroom is to make the journey a shorter and smoother one. In effect, the goal is to minimize the residence time needed to make a complete transition, but there are dangers in shortchanging the process, or assuming that transition will just happen organically. Ultimately, the desired outcome is not to "civilianize" the veteran to the point of stripping him or her of all military identity but, rather, for the veteran to successfully adapt to the civilian environment and add a civilian identity. In time, the veteran might then introduce features of military practice into the new civilian context, altering and positively influencing that civilian site.

Whatever the context, it is reasonable to assume that there will be significant challenges within the residence time of every veteran's transition, but difficulty in and of itself does not need not to be seen as a problem. In this regard, Giunta's analog to residence time, what he calls "pain time," may be useful for educational institutions, employers, and veterans themselves to consider:

You simply put in the pain time [in order to be in the 173rd]. . . . It's about more than just being assigned. You have to earn the privilege with sweat and patience and performance. It's conveyed in the primal execution of pushups and sit ups. You are yelled at and learn the history of the unit even as you sweat to become part of it. You want to just do your job, but you are made to wait and to earn through your fitness the right to join the group. I can't think of a better way to learn history. . . . It helped me move from a place of self-pity to one of strength and respect and admiration. (44)

Military service leaves a lasting imprint on the veteran and his or her literacy practices. As Giunta's and Meehan's stories suggest, for both better and worse, military induction processes, as constructions of a certain kind of workplace literacy, are highly successful at turning civilians, or what Giunta calls "kindred spirits—kids who had gotten sidetracked in one way or another" (22), into highly competent soldiers, airmen/women, sailors, and Marines. Having had this workplace literacy so successfully turned on, the challenge for education, industry, and veterans alike is to understand that it cannot and perhaps should not simply be turned off. It might be more effective to investigate how best to migrate military literacies over to new civilian contexts, how best to create a meaningful new set of "pushups" for the veteran to undertake, and in turn to expect that veterans will push civilian contexts to do some pushups themselves.

After more than a decade of wars and deployments since 9/11, the reintegration of millions of servicemen and women back into our communities, workplaces, colleges, and universities remains a perplexing societal issue, particularly for [an American public that in many ways has been disassociated from the intensive and life-changing experiences of its newest veterans \[http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/series/the-military-civilian-gap/\]](http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/series/the-military-civilian-gap/). We hope that in addressing this issue, we extend the discussion of the unique, valuable, and deeply seated literacies that military veterans carry with them as they return. We also hope that future studies will undertake additional analyses of military workplace literacies.

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